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Great Doctrine

OF

ATONEMENT.

LLLUSTRATED AND REPRESENTED IN A SCRIP-TURAL POINT OF LIGHT.

Theory or with the

IN A LETTER TO A FRIEND.

WALPOLE, N. H.
Printed at the Press of THOMAS & THOMAS,
BY D. AND T. CARLISLE, FOR THE AUTHOR.





THE

GREAT DOCTRINE

O F

ATONEMENT, &c.

DEAR BROTHER,

It that would have friends must shew himself friendlv: I remarked in a letter you wrote to a friend,
your friendly objections against my sentiments, on
the atonement of Christ for our salvation; and your
kind endeavours to rectify my mistakes. But I was
not so happy as to gain conviction; neither does it appear that you understand my ideas on the subject;—
therefore, I will state my mind on the doctrine of
Christ's atonement for the salvation of sinful men, that
you may have the advantage to remove the darkness of
my mind; that the darkness may pass, and the true
light shine. And first,

God the Father, angels and faints ascribe to Christ

the honour of making the atonement.

2dly. Christ, in the work of atonement, never executed any vengeance on any being for sin; but bore all affronts and injuries from sinners, without require

ing their deferts upon them.

gdly. God the Father, in the great work of atonement, is no more confidered as executing the punishment of fin on Christ, than Christ is considered as executing the punishment of fin on finners, when dying on the cross.

4thly. Atonement did not confist in punishment of fin, nor in punishment at all, in any positive sense.

5thly.

5thly. Christ had certain conditions to fulfil in performing the great work of atonement; as the second Adam: and atonement was found in what he did and performed in the whole of it, and not what was done to him, either by Godsthe Father, or by sinners.

6thly. The conditions Christ had to sulfit are asfollow; first, he humbled himself and took upon himthe form of a servant, and became obedient-unto death, even the death of the cross; he was under obligations to yield perfect obedience to the divine law: and be pure and perfect as the divine throne: this obedience God the Father, and God the Son, knew would be an occasion to raise the malice and rage of the wicked to that degree, they would murder him on the cross.

2dly. Christ was under obligations to maintain a constant exercise of love to God and man, according to the nature of the original claims of the divine law: and that spontaneously, as though there was no evil in the universe, or suffering to endure; Christ engaged in the work, he undertook the stern chase, and recovered the spoil. Christ, our saviour, bore all the sins of the people, even unto death, as a pattern of patience and humility, and that love which is the fulfilling of the law in perfection. Christ bore our fins in his own body on the tree, as a burden, and a condition of trial, and a proof of the perfection of his mediatorship; and not to be confidered an execution of government, punishing fin: Christ offered his life a sucrifice on the crofs, to witness to, and condemn Adam's act of rebellion, in transgression of the divine law; for sin he condemned fin in the flesh: in this he gave a high witness of the righteousness of God's government; in this, he honoured the Divine Sovereignty, in stating his government in whitever mode and form he faw fit; also he vindicated the righteoufness of God's government in the plan of his grace, in commanding him to lay down his life; for this was a law of government as thuch as the law was to Adam: therefore I do not fay in vain, that Christ offered his life a facrifice on the cross for the vindication of the righteousness of God's government; while I deny the idea of justice, punish.

as they deferve; and while I deny that justice fought a fatisfaction that way, it was not a punishment upon usor our furety, that procured us a pardon, or effected our redemption. Law and justice in punishing crimes is never considered so magnified and made honourable, as to procure bleffings for criminals; if justice is considered as punishing our fins in Christ, then its work is punishing crimes; and if its operation is punishing crimes, the divine law is not in the least magnified by all its work, and consequently there is no merit in the death of Christ, and therefore on this ground our falvation is eternally suspended.

Law and Justice have an eternal affection to approbate the innocent and condemn the guilty, neither will they alter their disposition, or mode of conduct, what-

ever event takes place among ft rebels.

Justice did not take an active part in the death of Christ in punishing; but eyed the victim with impartial attention, and faid amen with a fmile and approbation, at the love and grace, truth and faithfulness of the sufferer; therefore atonement did not consist in the punishment of fin nor the pains of death, but in a holyenduring of the fufferings for righteoulness' lake, and fulfilling the conditions of trial stated by infinite wifdom through the strength of love and holiness; that love and holiness, that reigned in the heart of Christ, which gave him flrength of victory in the combat, by which he repelled every foe, even fin, hell and death, that is the spirit and matter of atonement; but the sufterings of Christ are no more to be considered a punishment of the fins of the wicked race of Adam, than the martyrdom of Stephen is to be confidered a punishment of the fins of the world.

Christ, as mediator, is represented as a true and saithful witness. Now the work of a mediator is to slate the true nature of the controversy betwixt two contending parties. If the controversy is stated righteously, and both the parties agree with the statement, reconciliation takes place; when a true and righteous statement is made, and the saulty party does not agree with it, he is more criminal still, and Justice is more distatisfied with him than before. Christ, as a faithful witness from heaven, stated the controversy betwixt God and man in perfection, to the satisfaction and pleasure of the divine Father, and that to the sacrificing of his life; but he had not to be punished for our sins, by the divine Father, in weight and quantity as much as they deserve to accomplish it.

DEAR BROTHER.

I will give you a fimilitude that will lay before you my idea plainly: It a wife and good king had a numerous family of children; they all revolted from his government but the elder fon; committed treason and fled distant from their father's court; their rebellion flung them into a fickness of wild phrenzy and disorder; the elder brother, being a physician of perfect skill; the father propounds to him, if he will visit the rebellious, take his residence among it them, and prepare a medicine in presence of the rebellious family, which, if received and taken, will be an infallible remedy for their diforder; remove their phrenzy, and bring them to their right mind; they will return home to their father's courts, confess their fault, and receive pardon: but if he undertakes it he must bear all bruises and injuries while among it them, with perfect meekness and humility; he must bear all their iniquities, and not avenge the wrong; although they perfecute him even unto death; now their atonement does not confift in the pains and fufferings of their benefactor, but in the medicine and remedy provided for them; now Christ provided a table spread, a table of life in presence of his foes for the healing of their fouls; but justice was not employed in punishing the fins of rebels in Christ for the healing of their fouls.

Now, Sir, I will turn and look of your statement that contains your objections against my sentiments: You hold, dear Brother, that Christ has satisfied, by his obedience and death, the demands of divine justice for our fins; in my turn, I deny it: for, if Christ has satisfied justice by his obedience and death for my tans, then justice is satisfied with me fully and com-

pletely.

pletely, without mercy having any hand in the matter; and it will be an affront to juffice for me to suffer any degree of punishment for my fins, whatever: yea, justice is bound to secure me from any sufferings as much as it is the elect angels in heaven; yea, as much as it was to secure Christ from sufferings it he had not been

under that law which we had transgressed.

But it is an idea of confusion and wild disorder, to suppose that Christ, being under that law that we had transgressed, that death was his desert; or that justice had any such charge against him; therefore it is an idle trissing with the government of God, and with his attributes to represent that ever justice had a right to charge Christ with deserving death on the account of sin or summers, or ever pursue him as punishing their sins in him; or that justice is any ways satisfied for sinners in the death and sufferings of Christ; but more augmented with dissatisfaction; for their crimes were the highest affront to justice possible.

Hence to represent that our fins were imputed to Christ, and that justice punished our fins in Christ, or that justice, punishing Christ for our fins, satisfied justice, is a doctrine that is agreeable to every wicked heart among the wicked race of Adam's guilty samily; for there is nothing more agreeable to the wicked heart, than to cast off the blame of their wicked conduct upon some other one, and to have them punished for it too; therefore I am bold to conclude that the doctrine is a delusion, and a wrong representation of the govern-

ment of God.

Again, I have another observation to make on your statement; you tell me when a surety undertakes to pay the debt of another, justice exacts it of him with the same right as of the first debtor; I allow you have made a just statement in the form of commutative justice.

Now, Sir, we will try to fettle the question; if a furety undertakes to pay a debt for another, the first is free; and if the debt is paid, the door is eternally shut against forgiveness; and the debtor is everlastingly free without acknowledging any grace of forgiveness in the creditor.

creditor, and the debtor is under no condemnation. neither in respect of the debt; it is a delusion to pretend he is, and falle to fay that any just law condemns him about the matter, whether he is a good man or a bad one: therefore, it is idle for any body to talk about a debt being paid, and then find room to forgive the fame debt too; for furely there is no room for an exercife of love in fuch a case on the account of grace in a creditor; if we would attend to the meaning of scripture instead of images formed in our minds from darkness, relative to Christ paying sinners' debts; if Christ undertook to pay the sinner's debt, his work was to execute upon him the punishment of his crimes according to law and justice; but justice never considers itself satisfied when it has a work to do in punishing crimes: for crimes are an object of its displeasure: and punishment is an expression of displeasure, and not of Satisfaction; we are told in sacred writ that the wages of fin are death; and wages are due to every work, whether it be good or bad; and to pay the finner's debt is to punish him with death; now, kind brother, the death of Christ was not the wages of sin, in any sense, but a gift of the Father, and a gift of Christ, with all the subfequent bleffings flowing therefrom; if it had been the wages of fin, it could not have procured one ounce of blefling for one being in the universe.

It was not the work of justice in the death of Christ, to ast by way of distribution in punishing; but to eye the agent and determine on the slipulated conditions of the covenant betwixt the parties; it Christ suffilled the conditions of engagement under all the sufferings he had to meet with from sinners, justice was satisfied completely in the sufferer without joining with the

wicked in tormenting.

I firmly conclude that you believe, as well as I, that God is a being of infinite, perfect rectitude, and that his government and conduct is perfect as his nature; but our difficulty is when we give a portrait of what God has done; our doctrine, our description, either your doctrine or mine is a delusion; to command your attention to the subject I will give you a portrait upon the

the divine conflitution of grace, established in the court We have the following statement presented to view (viz.) God, our Creator, calls forth his first born fon, the heir of all things, and fays unto him; the new created inhabitants of yonder world fell by tranfgression; and are under the curse and the power of death for rebellion, and disobedience to my law; their state is eternally deplorable, if an act of grace is not extended to them; it is my mind to extend an act of grace to them to the honour of righteoufness: Hence we will fet before them a new constitution of government by a fecond man in human nature, asting as a subject of obedience in perfection, that the conduct of the obedient subject, and the conduct of the sovereign may be viewed before all worlds; and that the harmony betwixt the Creator and creatures may be viewed in its beauty and glory and that the value and worth of righteousness may be known by its rewards, in a stronger impression and sensation than ever was felt by creatures before; while the transaction shall be a high witness against Adam and his guilty race for their rebellion; and to the end that the perfection of order and the beauties of holiness may appear in the constitution: you, my beloved for, must be put on a condition of trial, as the father and head of the redeemed; as Adam was placed under a condition of trial, as moral head of all his posterity; and the claims of justice, truth, righteoulnels, mercy and grace will be upon you for the fulfilment of your condition of trial, that each one may there equal honour in the divine transaction, for that grace may reign through righteousness unto eternal life, in all those of the rebels that consent in, and agree with the constitution of righteousness wrought out by you; therefore I command you, my dear Son, to take a body I have prepared for you, and go down into yonder fallen world, and be born of a woman, where you will be incident to the evils they have introduced amongst them by their rebellion; and while you teel the evils of their rebellion, and the evils of their malice to crucifixion and death, you must not result; but must die with humble submission, as though you deserved the ... the fate; you must be perfectly meek, humble, andpatient, full of benevolence and good will for their. welfare, even unto death; without a breach in one. affection under the weight of all their wrath and fin, to the forrow of your foul even unto death. While their conduct in executing death upon you will be the most wicked crime, and act of injustice ever perpetrated: thus you must fulfil the condition, you must give your life a facrifice as the price of their redemption, and the highest work of righteousness my heart desires. Now. my beloved ion, ask of me a reward equal to the work I have commanded, and it shall be granted; and it shall be given you; for you are capable of knowing what is equal as well as I; and it was agreed betwirt the Father and the Son, that Christ should share a portion with the great, and divide the spoil with the strong; therefore the reward promised Christ was to have the government over all created beings, the honour of being redeemer of his people, the honour of being their great prophet, the honour of all the redeemed to be with him in heaven, acclamating his praise; the honour of being judge at the last grand solemn assife; he had the promife of feeing of the travail of his foul and being fatisfied; the beloved fon, full of duty, and zeal for the father's honour and glory, faid, I confent to the covenant, it is written in the volume of the book; lo! I come to do thy will, O my God; an awful folemnity diffuled through all the court; the father called for the approbation of all the court to the new conflitution; that it might go forth with the mutual affent and appro-

For thus it was effentially necessary to give it efficacy and authority; but O, the folema, awhile impression that pervaded the minds of all; there was filence in court for about the space of half an hour, for there was not one that was not equally concerned in the grand formation of the new and gracious constitution; then Justice arose with more majesty in countenance than that of an angel, and beckoned for audience and made reply as follows; I think that whatever is done in court, the tiest object of attention must be the honour and

glory of the divine Creator; if any thing is done that mars the divine glory, my right and dignity is infringed. upon likewise; for justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne; the divine law faid man shall die. for rebellion; my office was as angry judge to execute. the sentence; I have performed my office, I have executed on file the righteous sentence of the law, he isnow in the state of the dead : I have no more to do. I. cannot plead for the rebel, he shares a just desert : But I would observe, what I have replied is not out of a morole disposition, but of a benevolent concern for all the court; I am as benevolent as any one for the happinefs of man, in a way of righteoulness, but in the constitution framed for the redemption of man, Emmanuel is to die and suffer a cruel death under their wicked hands, and that will raife indignation and diffatisfaction in me, to a double height; for their crimes will be greater than Adam's first transgression; and I am eternally engaged for Emmanuel's welfare; and I shall not alter my mind: let all these matters be cleared up and reconciled, and I am fatisfied; then Truth arose and faid, my cause is the same with Justice; let matters be adjusted according to the proposals of Justice, and I am fatisfied; then Righteousness stept forth, decked with a breaftplate of truth! his countenance reflected brightness above the eastern light. He held the sceptre in his hand; his words were as determinate as the conclusions of truth; Righteousness observed he had always held the fceptre in his hand, and had always fwayed the fame in righteoufness; when angels rebelled, I gave my voice against them, in confining them in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great Day; when man rebelled I gave my voice against him in the fentence of execution; I approbate the innocent and condemn the guilty; I cannot approve any constitution that will mar my beauty; If by the constitution greater lustre can be added to my name, greater good brought to the universe, and all the divine attributes, have a more glorious display, and manifestation, I am facisfied to have the constitution put into execution; then Mercy arose to speak, and her countenance shone with

with meekness and beauty, and she spoke with a voice sufficient to melt the hardest heart; I think, said she, I can see liberty by the constitution for me to be honoured in communicating abroad the exceeding riches of my mercy; I claim honour in opening the stores of my bounty; according to the nature of the constitution; for surely it will be more to the honour of all the court for me to share a part of honour in the vent of the constitution, than to let such treasures as mine lie eternally hidden and concealed: I request that the constitution be put into execution, for the honour of my name,

and for the benefit of the miserable.

Mercy's plea had great weight in the council; then Grace flept forth; a bright splendor, more glorious than the sun, indicated the light vestiges of her seet, and her words dropt as balmy as the dew of the morning, and an energy attended her voice, that bore impression on all the court; she said, with arguments that could not be resisted, she observed, that no one in the court had a greater right to be honoured than she; neither would there be any operation in the universe, that will reslect greater honour upon all the court than for grace to perform her ass of mercy, in pardoning criminals according to the new constitution; and she requested Wisdom might slep forth and explain, definitely, the nature, meaning, import and rectitude of the new constitution, to the satisfaction of all the Court.

Now with folemn procession Wisdom steps torth before the grand august council, big with the treasures of
wisdom, as the woman's seed that should bruise the serpent's head; and she opened with a deportment which
evidenced to all the court, that she deliberated with perfect discernment every part of the constitution both
as to its nature and operation; all the court concluded
they should now result in perfect harmony and agreement; the court was all attention to hear Wisdom's
determination on the new formed constitution of goveroment; and she began the lesson and her language
did not run to waste; for every word had some meaning with it; she observed that God the creator compiled
the constitution, and no one could dispute that he who
had

had power to create had no right to govern; and it a

was his right to rule as fovereign.

adly. His power, wisdom, justice, truth, righteousness, mercy and grace had equal place in his nature, all in persection of harmony; so that it is impossible for him to make a mistake in government.

'3dly Wisdom explained every part of the constitution; the first particular was the death of Emmanuel,

and how it was to be viewed by the court.

And first, no one of the court was to have any hand in executing death on Emmanuel; nor strike him with a wound any way: 2dly, his death would devolve upon him by combat with suners; in combat with sin, hell and death; sin and sinners would cause and occasion all his sufferings.

4thly. In the combat would be feen the strength of righteousness in its magnificent height, and the high

criminality of fin in an awful contrast.

5thly. In this combat is feen an act of the most rich and abounding torbearance towards sinners possible, that ever can take place in the universe; in the sufferer is viewed the most persect respect to justice, truth, righteousness, mercy and grace, that ever can be seen through the vast dominions of Jehovah, or the divine attributes can require.

In the conduct of the murderers of the Son of God is evinced, in the most open manifestation, the highest, amazing criminality, enmity and opposition to all

goodness and righteousness.

othly. The fense and meaning of the court in this new constitution of government is to make a declaration of the righteousness of God in his divine law: and in the death of Christ to magnify the law, that God may declare his grace to sinners, for the righteousness sake of his son, to the praise and the glory of his grace.

7thly. It is not to be viewed that the finner's crimes deferved such a large quantity of punishment; and so it was measured off to Christ, and executed upon him by justice to get satisfaction that way: for justice will never have any hand in such crast and tragedy, if every sane goes to hell; for that would be just like the de-

Infion that many have been guilty of, in explaining the folern transaction; what justice had fatisfaction in was the faithfulness of the sufferer, that when tried he would die rather than transgress the law; rather die than do unjustly; therefore Christ honoured justice in his death; he faithfully suffilled every condition according to his agreement, and truth was honoured by him; he chose to die under the hands of the wicked rather than exterminate all the wicked crowd to hell; therefore love, mercy and grace were honoured by him.

8thly. Wisdom observed that the whole constitution, in the design and nature of it, is so compiled and stated that neither the father, nor the son nor justice is a punishing for sin any more than they were in giving the law to Adam; but that there was a covenant of conditions presented to Christ the first born heir of all things; and a promised reward upon suffilment; hence all the divine attributes hold claims upon the trustee to suffil his engagement, without joining with wicked men and devils, to load him with a tensold greater temptation to violate the Father's will, than what the wicked was able to do.

Therefore that notion of men, that justice undertook to punish our fins in Christ, is as great a delusion as

ever befel the human mind.

Moreover, Wisdom added, for a full explanation of the constitution, that no one in court had to undergo a greater degree of self denial, and condescension than Justice, while the wicked hold the saviour in their bloody hands; for it is the province of justice to execute vengeance for all criminality, and unjust cruelty; and every member of the court must exercise the same forbearance; for every member of the court is of one sentiment and disposition in the constitution; and in the hour of Emmanuel's sufferings, will feel the most pungent sympathy and commisseration for the sufferer every known in the universe; while all the court are sacredly bound to avenge the wrong and criminality done to the Prince of lite on all the rebels that do not receive

the overture of mercy, and bow down to Emmanuel's sceptre: for a bright, and brilliant display and manifestation of the glory of God will be made in the display of righteousness, either in the falvation or damnation of all the guilty family of Adam's race, according to the grand standard of righteousness reared to view in the dying Redeemer; and to add all in one word necessary upon the divine conflitution of grace, in the death of Emmanuel, it is to witness to, and make a declaration of the righteousness of the divine law; to witness to the criminality and guilt in creatures, in transgressing the holy law of God; to witness to the righteousness of the sentence that life should go for transgression; for the fon of God, when tried, gave up the most valuable of all lives rather than transgress; to witness to the abounding benevolence of God in his willingness that finners should return to their allegiance upon an act of righteousness and grace through his son; and that pardon and falvation be bestowed upon them sovereign and free, to the praise and glory of righteousness and grace: while bright majesty clothes the solemn scene, with an awful mandate of a facred record, fealed and fent by Father, Son and Holy Ghost, to the rebellious family of Adam's guilty race; to bow the knee and honour the fon in a thankful reception of the gracious overture; and, for the future, submit to an edict of law, that he should give them, or they should receive an aggravated condemnation for their abuse of grace and double contempt of divine authority; and the whole court will receive honour and renown by the conflitution, every way, both as to the form and operation of it; and I can affure the court, the one we are about to fend to put the constitution into execution, is completely qualified for the undertaking: and Wisdom added, let a portrait of the constitution be put on record, and sent to the milerable family of criminals a fuitable time before Emmanuel's visit to the habitation of the rebellious family; that the divine designs of grace may be known; that all may be ready to receive him with joy and . thankfgiving, or be found criminally guilty for abuse of goodness and grace. Wisdom said no more to explain the constitution; but spoke to Emmanuel, who now fat on a throne of glory, to step forth; accordingly he did. She asked him if the constitution was explained to his satisfaction; he said, amen; be pleased, said Wisdom, to walk back and forth before the Court; he obeyed the direction, and O! what majesty attended his footsteps! while beauty shone in his countenance fairer than the children of men; all the court smiled upon him with a rapture that cannot be described.

Approbation was given to him by all the Court, it was proclaimed before him with the found of a trumpet, Thou hast trodden down strength; the court was all agreed in the constitution, and all hard ontously agreed to have it confirmed more unalterably than the laws of the Medes and Persians, and fully be put into execution; every divine attribute was set in harmony; Mercy and Truth met together; Righteousness and

Peace kiffed each other.

Thus, Sir, I have stated the difference betwixt my fentiments and yours, on the atonement of our salvation; if you still retain the notion that atonement was made by justice, punishing our sins in Christ for satisfaction; I despair of offering any thing to convict your mind of the propriety of the other points you saulted; if you receive the light of the scriptures, and your mind is sanstified from tradition, on this subject of atonement, it will be as easy to demonstrate to you the New Tessament authority, for the other points you objected to, as that three and two are sive.

DEAR BROTHER,

Listen a moment to your own statement: I have often read in books to the grating of my mind, and heard the same in preaching often, (viz.) that Christ has suffered all the punishment that was due to sinners in their room and stead; that Christ has died in the room and stead of sinners; that our fins were imputed to Christ, and that he was punished for them in our room and stead, according to strict justice; that Christ has borne the burden of our sins, and suffered the punishment due for them.

Your statement is, in your letter, that Christ by his obedience and death has satisfied divine justice for our fins: the expressions have one signification, and one of them contains the whole; therefore, let us look at the conclusion of such a statement, and its proper signification which is as follows:

1st. In the method God has taken to fave finners he has joined fellowship with finners in their wicked.

felfish deceitful disposition and conduct.

2dly. That in order to screen sinners from suffering the pusishment of their fins according to the sentence of penalty denounced in the divine law; that he has shifted his charge against them of criminality and desert, and has imputed it to Christ, and has punished him for it according to strict justice to full satisfaction.

3dly. God has cleared the guilty and condemned the

innocent.

4thly. God has been false to his word of threatening that the sinner should die; for Christ has died in the room and stead of sinners, and Justice is satisfied, and therefore the sinner is in no danger of meeting with any difficulty for his transgressions.

5thly. The felfish, wicked heart of the sinner is gratified to the last degree; for Christ has borne all the burden of his fins, and suffered all the punishment due

for them, in his room and stead.

6thly. Your statement denies that Christ made the atonement, and certifies that Justice made it in punish-

ing Christ.

7thly. To charge finners that they are under condemnation for their fins, is false and wicked; for Justice has made satisfaction for them in punishing Christ; and therefore sinners are the objects of the divine complacence.

8thly. Justice punishing our fins in Christ, or punishing Christ for our fins, till it was satisfied therefor, it no ways wants to remove fin out of the way; for in

regard of any object that Justice is satisfied for, he wants no removal of it.

softhly.- Justice is satisfied with sinners; for their sins

have been punished to his full satisfaction, and therefore Justice wants no alteration in the sinner at all.

This is the natural and plain meaning of your flatement, if any form of words have any fignification with them; if the premifes are allowed their meaning, the

inferences are absolutely certain.

But thus it is; tradition has blinded our understandings, to set forth the great doctrine of the atonement of our falvation in such a statement, and in such a point of light, as cast the greatest dishonour on the divine character, and is the greatest reproach to the divine government, and a representation which every believer's soul abhors. May the Lord enlighten our understandings in the mysteries of the kingdom; forgive our mistakes, turn Zion's captivity, that the watchmen may see, eye to eye, that glory may rest in the Zion of God.—I remain your fincere friend and brother in the gospel.

EBENEZER BAILEY.



